

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
ASSISTANT SECRETARY

December 11, 1958

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TO: EUR - Mr. Merchant
FROM: P - Andrew H. Berding

*GER + EE given copies.
We'll get our heads
together on this. PEX*

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The other day at the briefing on NATO the Secretary mentioned a discussion he and I had on the plane in which I advanced the idea of a comprehensive proposal to the Soviets on Germany to be made sometime in the next couple of months. I thought you might be interested in my thoughts which run as follows:

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The three Western powers would present a whole new package set of proposals to the Soviets. These would include the various points made at the 1955 Foreign Ministers Conference in Geneva, but restated so as to be given the maximum amount of understanding and resonance. I feel, as does the Secretary, that, while the proposals at Geneva were very far reaching, they were obscured by the failure of that conference and have never been given the reception they should have received in world opinion.

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As you recall, we proposed at Geneva, in one form or another, a security agreement with the Soviets which would have guaranteed them as well as Poland and Czechoslovakia against attack by a reunited Germany. We proposed that a united Germany would be free to choose as to membership in NATO; but in any event, no NATO forces and no German military forces would be stationed in East Germany. Also there would be no addition to the military strength of a united Germany above what is already permitted for the German Federal Republic government, i.e., 12 divisions.

There were also a couple of other proposals made at the Geneva Conference which could be refurbished.

In addition, it might well be that we could come up with additional proposals to put into the package. These might include a guarantee not to place atomic weapons or ICBM's in German hands. It might include a phased withdrawal from or reduction of troops in Germany as the Western Germans became more able to contribute to their own defense.

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Accompanying this package might be a proposal for a Four Power Foreign Ministers Conference on this subject, preceded by diplomatic preparation.

This proposal by the three Western powers would be accompanied by a proposal by the German Federal Republic Government. This would propose an agreement whereby the Bonn government would promise not to place military forces in East Germany, to continue in effect the guarantee against increase in West German military strength above the 12 division limit, to continue the arms restrictions on type and size and manufacture of the WEU agreement, would promise no use of force or threat of force against Czechoslovakia and Poland with regard to boundary matters, and (possibly) would suggest a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union.

I think it is obvious that if we are going to have world public opinion with us with regard to Berlin to the extent desired we are going to have to adopt as positive a position as possible with regard to Germany as a whole. The Soviets themselves are looking beyond Berlin to Germany, and we must do the same.

I think we must realistically admit to ourselves that the Soviets probably have very deep and justified fears of a reunited militarized Germany. Having had the tragic experience of two world wars with the Germans this is understandable. That being the case, the Soviets undoubtedly feel that their own security demands that either they keep Germany divided permanently or themselves bring about reunification in such a way as to bring Germany under their control. The only way possible to swerve them from this course is to offer them such guarantees, by ourselves particularly, that there might be some chance of reducing their fears.

Admittedly the chances are virtually all weighted against their accepting our package proposal. But if they do so, they will have a heavy disadvantage in world opinion.

I have heard it said that the German Federal Republic Government does not like the Geneva proposals. I think, however, that we can exchange a firm attitude on Berlin for their acquiescence in a package which, even if it has little likelihood of being accepted, would put us on the right side before the world.

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